

Re-approaching the Meaning of “Innovative Service” on Generating Process of New Service : MEIJI Milk Express Study Case –Provider and User Perspective of innovative/innovated service–

Leisa Moreno

Abstract

This paper adopted tow research methods : systematic literature review to identify how has been services defined as innovative beside the novelty determinant component identification allowing such definition ; and single-case study, that demonstrates the need of such clarification for services which indeed belong to the past and were re-introduced in present time. The analysis focuses on the MEIJI Company “new” delivery service and explores how the provider and users are able to identify the service as innovative. The findings here after reported give the degree of how it urges the need to identify novelty determinant components on the present time for similar cases.

1. Introduction

What is an innovative service?

Shall it be understood as service that “innovates” verb predominance approaching sense or innovation on/in or for the service? For non-native English speakers like different Latin based language : “service qui innove ou service (re)innovée ou service innovant” ; “serviço que inova ou serviço (re)inovado ou serviço inovador” ; once again in English : “Innovative service”, service that have been innovated or that innovates. Looking to questions introducing the conference¹⁾ it is easy to lead comprehension focus to newly generated services. And reflection towards novelty in and for (insisting on the difference language leading understanding matter) services available in this century. Appearing now a days or coming from the past?! In a simple analogy we can take reference of “fashion cycles” : inspirations of past (re-)introducing renewed and improved versions.

“Innovative” : verb or adjective (action, attitude, behavior or characteristics)?!

1) The earlier version of this paper is included in the proceedings of RESER2015 here presented the acknowledgements to the comments from the attendants.

Meaning “New” or “Renewed” Service?!

Shall in this paper all notions, definitions and specificities of service be taking in importance : as process as product as well as set of characteristics in a product (Gallouj 1984).

Service : comes from to serve, letting others do it to you, for you. So is that any “personal gesture” turn out in to an economic activity synonymous of innovating in service’s sector?!

Is it convenient then to talk about innovative services because services providers decided to do it for the user/client instead of letting it to be done by the client or only because it never was done before?

Something when taking in account details in a service as process and enlighting it as new when one of innovation types (radical, improvement and incremental) operates over specific detail?

Re-evaluating user/consumer’s decision on “participating” versus “non-participating” at the *Genesis* of innovative services (social dimension of co-creation of value) allow us to ask if we can consider be in front of an infinity source of potential service business activity? For that as soon as the future user decides to no longer do it on his own and waits for a service provider to take hand and do it for him. We are allowed to state an innovative service.

How to measure the degree of novelty under such considerations?

Service engineering and R&D in services shall be the main way/place to identify innovative characteristic of such generative process conditions.

But R&D in services is not adequately reflected in the productivity statistics and so underestimated. Here is an interesting concern to put at light researches on what to qualify as innovative service (Djellal et al 2003). And this said, it is also impossible to do not take on pair the productivity matter related to services.

User/client/market-oriented services instead of traditional sense administrative public services got its word on innovative services : it extends the insight into complementing or not complementing service activities.

Food industry does not stay behind on the world Servitization adaptation process. The new type of value creation is based on the offering product-service system (PSS). In an economy such as the Japanese one focused on the changing order we find the proof when MEIJI a very well-known and owner of an honorable reputation brings back to the light of the day an old fashioned service : Fresh Milk Delivery Service.

This subject pushes a review through all concerns around defining innovative service. This is the novelty carried by this paper : the re-introduction of old fashioned services

creating a sort of illusion of new for users which lead to re-approach the meaning of “Innovative Service” on the process of generating new services. Do we have here then a brand new category of services to be studied and introduced to services innovation taxonomy?

Let's then apply evaluation modes suggested by previous reflections on this matter.

2. Research Methods

For the common sense belief : “Innovative Services” are those awaking the attention of the user (actual ones as well as potential ones) by a “difference” caused by an element not recognized by the user up until the moment the refereed service is available.

This paper essence idea is : a given innovative service can be considered as such by the moment it is seen by users alike and then become reproduced for the potential and future users.

Two methods have been used :

1. Systematic Literature Review : based on rigorous and reproducible steps that allow the linking of future research to questions and concerns posed by the past research (Thorpe et al. 2005) :
2. Case Study Research : producing first-hand understanding (Yin, 2004), and its ability to examine in-depth a case within real-life context (Tavoletti, 2007).

2.1. Systematic Literature Review

Data collection

Based on traditional systematic review process, the following set of criteria have been established²⁾ :

- EBSCOhost as the research database ;
- All chosen articles were published in English ;
- All articles were from 2000 ;
- Keywords used were : service, innovative, definition ;
- Abstracts helped on final selection ;
- Full reading of articles ;

A total of 15 papers composed the dataset regarding to identify how has been services defined as innovative adjacent to the novelty determinant component identification allowing

2) New method for litterature review.

such definition.

Dataset analysis

Analysing the dataset there are some considerations to take in account : fully dedicated papers to innovative service definition are “inexistent” ; the number of papers ranged by the database related to the keywords increased after 2010 ; topics were of a multidisciplinary nature but management predominance is easily noticed.

Results

Deepening the analysis it is possible to identify a lack of studies examining explicitly innovative services definition. Furthermore the generating process of new services also suffers same scarcity.

Focus was about innovations *in* service often entitled as “innovation service”. And this takes us back to preliminary distinction made for semantic matters.

However a simplistic, brief and dual categorization allows ranging the read articles as follow :

➤Innovation basis : all the literature measuring the degree of novelty of service.

AND

➤Management basis : all the organizational structure support to generate new service.

2.2. Case study

“Single-case studies can richly describe the existence of a phenomenon” (Siggelkow, 2007).

Through the diversified, performing and crowned by novelty Japanese service universe one case was picked to embody this paper.

Adopting a prime descriptive introducing method the case is presented. Then follows an analyse that evolves through questions ruled by a multidimensional approach. In order to follow an ideal evaluation of respective “Innovative” characteristic/adjective/behaviour of services.

In this single-case study simple interview were conducted with the chosen service provider and respective users. It allowed to gather from each side : general information and activity description (provider) ; general information concerning the identification and the choice of new service (user) ; identification and description of a new service generating process (provider) ; measuring and appreciating novelty of service (user). There were opened and closed questions as well as multi-choice level scaled questions.

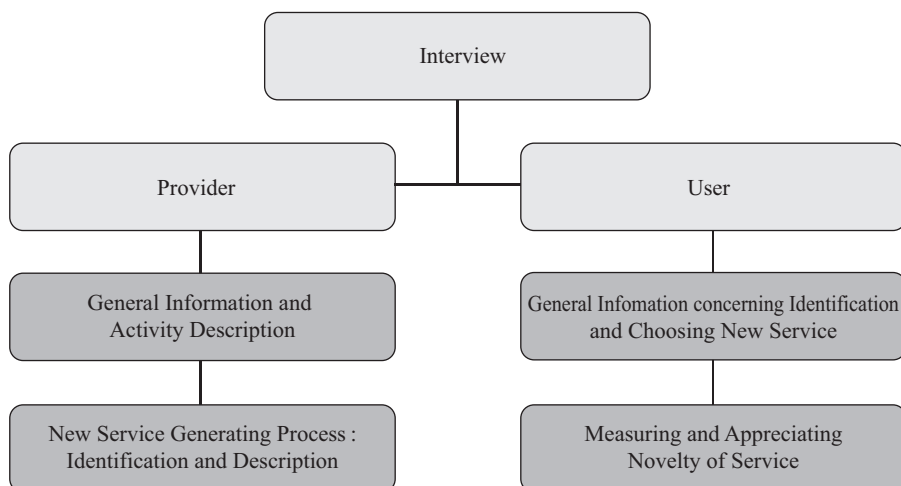


Figure 1 : Interview key points. Source : Own elaboration.

Data collection

In order to respond to the paper aim the Case Study Research method was used to produce a “first-hand” understanding (Yin, 2004) due to the ability it provides on examine in-depth a case with real-life context (Tavoletti, 2007 ; Yin, 2004).

Interviewing service provider and service users (the “how”) by the belief only the lived experience by both side shall reveal the novelty degree (the “why”) contained by the chosen service.

All the interviews (to providers and to users) were guided by a pre-elaborated questionnaire which the targets could have in hand along at the interview moment.

Data analysis

A cross-interview analysis allowed insights from each interview compared to one and another.

3. Findings

Up-and-coming findings from the data analysis are here reported.

Service research universe after strong empowerment still have room for improvements on novelty degree measurements along side with continuous hard work on service productivity measurements.

The paper insights aim to contribute on future brain storming(s) dedicated to improve construction of solid tools for innovative service identification, definition, classification,

evaluation and so on.

Innovative service generating process

Every and any process is considered as a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end in general. Here in particular to generate services that is new, original and introduces changes taking in consideration respective creative origin. Undeniable additional perspective shall be taken when facing brand new services ; especially when using existing tools for identification, definition, classification, evaluation and so on.

Despite the semantic distinction concern launching the essence idea of this paper, data indicated in the case for MEIJI Corporation decision to introduce the service answered the market demand of servitization.

The innovative service generating process appears here like obeying to context and conjuncture exigencies.

***Cyclical Momentums* definitions of innovative services**

Timing for questioning to overcome changes seems discarding any order or regent law.

Suggesting to revisit or to make a retrospective analysis of “new” or “renewed” or “reintroduced” service among existing analyses supported by this paper aims to call attention up on innovative service distinct from service innovation. It can be ranged as revisiting a concept or notion paper.

Cyclical momentums definitions get its “inspiration” by the time line simple observation : In a moment at high demand, the supply response is ruled by dropping aside of alternative solutions ; and contextual reconfigurations re-bring on vogue former distinct solutions.

What to say for the milk delivery service staging and solid comeback?

Looking at the choice made by MEIJI Corporation to bringing back from past a service instead of suggesting fully brand new creation of service type suggests new insights regarding innovative service identification, definition, classification, evaluation and so on. This makes questions the use of fashion cyclical returns as analogy for this specific case.

Become a servitization strategy applied successfull company on Food Industry

Innovating and integrating successfully as moving into service universe is usually made facing difficulties. This is said because mutations on management must be done. Service businesses come into the long living different kind of organization.

MEIJI Corporation (re)introducing the delivery service made use of its market needs

knowledge following business strategy and niche opportunities on Food Industry. A whole management section of Meiji Dairies Corp.'s home delivery was created. Moreover a social dimension is to be taking in account : aging population matter. Therefore the market could and still can expect further growth in sales and profits as the population still ages.

We here assist to an adoption of the servitization strategy making full use of knowledge acquired by MEIJI Corporation. Being a hard core food industry organization, the company could by adding a service add knowledge of its own market : servitization strategy adoption requires the acquisition of new knowledge (Leoni 2015).

It would be very interesting to make a comparative analyze between types of delivery services on food industry available for users

Users and costumers perspective

The success of any novelty is related to the market reaction and more precisely to the market adoption and pragmatically utilization on daily basis.

After discovering the novelty a major concern for respective suppliers is the taking in of as alternative between multi solutions provided by the market.

Following MEIJI Philosophy extreme importance is attached to clients' feedback. A direct appreciation of the value co-creation as well as an improvement of knowledge concerning this specific service is cherished. At same time it allows the Corporate a boost on delivery outlets' promotional activities as it is easier to pitch new products.

Another plus for this service is the client advising the potential ones to become actual clients. Positive experiences benefits from the neighbors "bouche-à-oreille" information divulgation current.

Users taking part in this study allowed to analyze how the re-introduction of this particular old fashioned delivery service was positively adopted in a context of a very specific good. The "New" as identification for the choice of solution gained a "to be considerate" aspect. Being take as "new" by the user when is it "old" touch in about category of innovation for service research in this paper humble point of view.

4. Discussion and conclusions

There is always room for growth in producer services activity, particularly in the information field and chiefly for those related to R&D functions : innovative services just come from it tricking mind feature as for the question what comes first, "the egg or the thicken".

In further and deeper multidisciplinary analyses this revisiting proposal can reveal policy implications, for example. And this can be of different nature : social (aging population), environmental (“milk man” dislocation versus all service users’ dislocation to purchase the item), etc.

The chosen case might have a prime individual “wellbeing” contribution and “solving problem” visage. The system offered by the delivery service has more than primer social effect. As MEIJI have shops centralizing the departure point of fresh product, environmental issue has also its dimension taken in account. Same for the economic one (employment) : the more the number of clients grows, the more employees will be needed to respond with service quality.

We hope to see more and more analyzing study cases adopting “multi-criteria and system dynamic perspectives” evaluation. The empowered evaluation’s evolution through the “Innovative Services” universe that we now live in has yet details that can be caught by their mutating shapes in the ongoing innovation service process.

Acknowledgments

Gratefull acknowledges are here addressed to all MEIJI professionals that gave time and attention to the study. Special acknowledgments goes to Yasuyuki Nishigaki Sensei and Elie Mizokami.

References

- F. Castellacci (2008), “Technological paradigms, regimes and trajectories : Manufacturing and service industries in a new taxonomy of sectoral patterns of innovation”, *ELSEVIER Research Policy*, Volume 37, Issues 6–7, July 2008, Pages 978–994
- F. Gallouj (2002), *Innovation in the Service Economy – the New Wealth of Nations*, Edward Elgar
- J. Gadrey and F. Gallouj (2002), *Productivity, Innovation and Knowledge in Services*, Edward Elgar
- F. Djellal and F. Gallouj (2008), *Measuring and Improving Productivity in Services – Issues, strategies and Challenges*, Edward Elgar
- K. Hyytinen, S. Ruutu, M. Nieminen, F. Gallouj and M. Toivonen (2014), “Evaluation of services linked to sustainability : a dynamic and multi-criteria approach” *Proceedings XXIV. International RESER Conference 2014*, Helsinki, Finland. 2014
- L. Leoni (2015), “Adding services means adding knowledge : the successful case of the IBM Corporation”, *Business Process Management Journal* 06/2015 ; 21 (3) : 610–627. DOI : 10.1108/BPMJ-07-2014-0063
- L. Moreno (2015), “Re-approaching the Meaning “Innovative Service” on Generating New Service Process : MEIJI Milk Express study case (fresh milk home delivery service)–Provider and User perspectives as innovative/innovated service”, *Proceedings of RESER meeting 2015*, Copenhagen, September 2015

- N. Siggelkow (2007), “Persuasion with case studies”, *Academy of Management Journal* 50, pp. 20-24.
- E. Tavoletti (2007), “La case study research methodology per la ricerca in economia e gestione delle imprese”, In *Il settore immobiliare visto attraverso la case study research methodology*, Giappichelli, Torino.
- R. Thorpe, R. Holt, A. Macherson, L. Pittaway (2005), “Using knowledge within small and medium-sized firms : A systematic review of the evidence, *International Journal of Management Reviews*
- R. K. Yin (2004), “Case Study Methods”. In : *Complementary Methods for Research in Education*. Washington DC : American Educational Research Association.

Appendix A



<https://www.meiji.co.jp/english>

Corporate Profile

Trade Name	Meiji Co., Ltd.
Main Businesses	Manufacturing and sale of confectioneries, milk and dairy products, and other foods
Head Office	2-10 Shinsuna 1-chome, Koto-ku, Tokyo 136-8908, Japan
President	Kazuo Kawamura
Established	December 21, 1917
Paid-in Capital	¥33,646 million
Annual Sales	(Fiscal year ended March 2015) ¥1,021,806 million
Number of Employees	(As of March 31, 2015) 10,940
Meiji Group Annual Sales	(Fiscal year ended March 2015) ¥1,161,152 million
Number of Meiji Group Employees	(As of March 31, 2015) 16,559

Corporate History

1906	The former Meiji Sugar Co., Ltd. (hereinafter “Meiji Sugar”), the forerunner of the Meiji Group, is established.
1916	Tokyo Confectionery Co., Ltd. (hereinafter “Tokyo Confectionery”), the predecessor of Meiji Seika, is established.
1917	Tokyo Confectionery merges with Taisho Seika, a subsidiary of Meiji Sugar.
	Tokyo Confectionery starts manufacturing caramels and biscuits at its Okubo Plant.
	Kyokuto Condensed Milk Co., Ltd. (hereinafter “Kyokuto Condensed Milk”), the predecessor of Meiji Dairies, is established.
	Kyokuto Condensed Milk starts manufacturing condensed milk and other products.
1920	Meiji Sugar Co., Ltd. establishes Meiji Shoten (later Meiji Shoji).
1924	Tokyo Confectionery Co., Ltd. changes its name to Meiji Seika Kaisha, Ltd. (hereinafter “Meiji Seika”).
1926	Meiji Seika launches “Milk Chocolate.”
	Meiji Seika launches a cocoa powder drink mix.
1928	Meiji Seika launches “Meiji Milk.”
1940	Kyokuto Condensed Milk changes its name to Meiji Dairies Corporation (hereinafter “Meiji Dairies”).
1951	Meiji Dairies launches “Soft Curd Meiji Infant Formula.”
1953	Meiji Dairies launches “Meiji Fresh Cream.”
1961	Meiji Seika launches “Marble Chocolate.”
1962	Meiji Seika launches “Almond Chocolate.”
1968	Meiji Seika launches the Japan's first savory snack, “Karl.”
	Meiji Dairies launches baby food products, “Meiji Baby Rice Gruel” and “Meiji Infant Kaju Orange Juice.”
1971	Meiji Dairies launches “Meiji Plain Yogurt.”
	Meiji Seika launches a sugar candy, “Chelsea.”
1972	Meiji Shoji, Meiji Seika's sales arm, transfers its dairy products business to Meiji Dairies.
	Meiji Seika merges with Meiji Shoji.
1973	Meiji Dairies launches “Meiji Bulgaria Yogurt.”
1974	Meiji Seika (Singapore) Pte., Ltd. is established.
1975	Meiji Seika launches the chocolate snack, “Kinoko no Yama.”
1976	Meiji Dairies launches the frozen food, “Pizza & Pizza.”
1980	Meiji Seika launches “SAVAS,” a series of protein for athletes.
1983	Meiji Seika launches the OTC drug, “ISODINE UGAIGUSURI.”
1986	Meiji Dairies launches the enteral formula, “YH-80.”
1988	Meiji Seika launches “Kaju Gummy.”

1989	Meiji Dairies establishes CP-Meiji Co., Ltd. in Thailand.
1990	Meiji Dairies launches a soft margarine, “Meiji Corn 100.”
1992	Meiji dairies launches “Meiji Hokkaido Tokachi Cheese.”
1993	Meiji Seika launches “Meltykiss.”
1994	Meiji Dairies launches “Meiji Essel Super Cup Ultra Vanilla.”
	Meiji Seika launches “Ginza Curry.”
1995	Meiji Dairies launches the sports performance drink, “VAAM.”
	Meiji Dairies launches the enteral formula, “Mei Balance.”
1996	Meiji Dairies launches “Meiji Butter in Tube 1/3 Calories.”
	Meiji Seika launches the chocolate snack, “galbo.”
1997	Meiji Seika launches “Xylish Gum.”
1998	Meiji Seika launches “Chocolate Kouka.”
1999	Meiji Seika launches a chocolate-snack, “Fran.”
2000	Meiji Dairies launches “Meiji Probio Yogurt LG21.”
2002	Meiji Dairies expands the distribution of “Meiji Oishii Gyunyu” nationwide.
	Meiji Seika launches “Amino Collagen.”
2007	Meiji Dairies launches the cube-type infant formula, “Meiji Hohoemi Raku Raku Cube.”
2008	Meiji Dairies launches the sports nutrition beverage, “SUPER VAAM.”
	Meiji Dairies launches the fresh cream for professional use, “Meiji Fresh Cream Ajiwai.”
2009	In April, Meiji Seika and Meiji Dairies establish a joint holding company “Meiji Holdings Co., Ltd.” (hereinafter “Meiji Holdings”) and integrate the management.
	Meiji Dairies launches “Meiji Probio Yogurt R-1.”
2010	Prepares the Meiji Group 2020 Vision as a long-term business management strategy.
2011	In April, Meiji Holdings reorganizes Meiji Seika and Meiji Dairies ; Meiji Co., Ltd. (hereinafter “Meiji”), a food company, and Meiji Seika Pharma Co., Ltd., a pharmaceuticals company, begin operation.
	Meiji launches new margarine, “Meiji Healthy Soft Offstyle.”
2015	Meiji launches “Meiji Probio Yogurt PA-3.”

Appendix B

インタビュー

I. 活動の記述

活動：

- 御社の活動を簡単にご説明願えますでしょうか。
- 御社の活動を構成する要素にはどのようなものがあるでしょうか。

職場について：

- 活動に使用する空間はどのようなものでしょうか。
- それはどのように構成されていますでしょうか。(単一の間、複数の間 など)

人員について：

- どちらからいらっしゃっていますか。

顧客について：

- この新しいサービスに、何名の顧客が申し込みをされていますか。

II. 新たに創設されたサービス

- 御社の活動の中で、最も革新的な部門は何でしょうか。
- 社の新たなサービスに関連する規則や制約とは何でしょうか。

III. 新たに創設されたサービスの進展と反響

全般的質問：

- 御社の活動に類する活動において、新たなサービスの出現に影響を与えるような大きな進展とは何だったのでしょくか。
- 御社の活動に類するような活動で、新たなサービスの出現を刺激するような、どのような変化があったのでしょうか。
- 御社の活動に類するような活動において、何が新たなサービスの出現を制限しているのでしょうか。
- 御社の活動において、新たなサービスの創設を可能にする大きな変化をどのように決定できるのでしょうか。

詳細に関する質問：

- 御社はどのように新たなサービスを展開されるのでしょうか。
- 新たなサービスへの需要の高まりはどのように説明できますでしょうか。

明治宅配サービス顧客へのアンケート

以下の項目について、可能な限り具体的にご回答ください。

1. どのようにしてこの宅配サービスをお知りになったのですか？

.....

.....

.....

2. この宅配サービスをどの程度新しいサービスだと感じましたか？ 以下の数字の中から最もあてはまるものに○をつけてください。

- 1 まったく新しくない
- 2 どちらかと言えば新しくない
- 3 どちらとも言えない
- 4 どちらかと言えば新しい
- 5 とても新しい

3. 他の多くの会社でも同様のサービスをしている中、明治の宅配サービスを選ばれた理由をお聞かせください。

.....

.....

.....

4. サービス向上のために、顧客側からサービス提供者側へ意見を述べることは、どれくらい重要だとお考えですか？ 以下の数字の中から最もあてはまるものに○をつけてください。

- 1 まったく重要でない
- 2 どちらかと言えば重要ではない
- 3 どちらとも言えない
- 4 どちらかと言えば重要
- 5 とても重要

5. まだこのような宅配サービスを受けていない人にこのサービス（明治のものに限らない）を薦めるとすれば、何を理由に薦めますか？

.....

.....

.....

ご協力ありがとうございました。

Interview grid

General Information concerning Identification and Choosing New Service

Service Provider :

I. Describing the activity

The activity :

- How to describe in short terms your activity? Denomination (Corporation)?
- What are the elements composing your activity?

The work place :

- What are the spaces used for the activity?
- How is it structured (mono site, multi sites, etc.)

The work force :

- From where

The Costumers :

- How many clients subscribed for the new service?
- How big is the area covered by the service?

II. Novel Generated Service

Which is the most innovative branch in your activity?

Which are the regulations and constraints related to your new service?

III. Evolution and repercussion of Novel Generated Service

General questions :

- What were big evolutions in your kind of activity that influence new services to come out?
- What could change in your kind of activity stimulating new services to come out?
- What can be constraining new services to appear in your kind of activity?
- How are decided big changes allowing new services to be generated in your activity?

Directive questions :

- How do you develop new services?
- How can be explained the raise on demand for the new service?

Service User :

I. General Information concerning Identification and Choosing New Service

1. How have you discovered this service?
2. How would you measure the novelty (degree) of this Service?
 - 1 : not important
 - 2 : less important
 - 3 : neutral
 - 4 : important a bit
 - 5 : very important
3. What pushed you to choose it as alternative?
4. How important you think feedback from users is for providers generating new services process?
 - 1 : not important
 - 2 : less important
 - 3 : neutral
 - 4 : important a bit
 - 5 : very important
5. Why would you advise using this new service?

(Received June 17, 2016)